



## WINCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

# STREETSCAPE

**T**he publicly owned parts of Winchester's Historic District are as important as the private structures in helping define the unique character of the area. Throughout the district, sidewalks, street trees, and the network of streets and alleys make for a pleasant and rich walking experience. The pedestrian oriented focal point of the district is the Loudoun Street Mall with its outdoor cafes, small shops and distinctive street furniture, historically styled light fixtures, colorful banners and brick pavers.

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Other features that reflect the special district character are limestone curbs and special focal points of fountains, outdoor art and historical plaques. The following streetscape guidelines encourage retaining such character-defining features, expanding their use when the opportunity arises, and making additional improvements to create a streetscape that complements the historic nature of the district.

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## TREES, PLANTINGS, AND OPEN SPACE

- 1** Maintain the canopy effect of mature deciduous shade trees throughout the residential streets of the district.
- 2** Maintain existing plantings in all public areas, especially indigenous species. Improve maintenance and expand use of seasonal color in plantings in public parking lots and auto-parks and along Indian Alley as well.
- 3** Replace damaged or missing street trees with appropriate species such as maple or ash. Use indigenous and hardy species that require minimal maintenance.
- 4** Expand the use of the existing portable planters. Site them so that they do not block narrow sidewalks and remove them in winter months when they are empty.
- 5** Pursue opportunities for passive and active recreation areas in the historic district to serve all segments of the population.



One of Winchester's most important civic spaces is created at the intersection of the Loudoun Street Mall with the forecourt of the historic Frederick County Courthouse.

Street trees help create a canopy effect on several blocks within the historic district.



## STREETS, PARKING, AND PAVING



Plantings help screen this parking lot.



Distinctive brick paver patterns add character to the surface of this asphalt parking area.

- 1** Maintain the existing rectangular grid of the street network.
- 2** Retain any remaining historic paving or curbing; and if any such material is uncovered in future public projects, consider reusing it or parts of it in the new project.
- 3** Make street paving consistent throughout the district. Avoid the cosmetic patching of surfaces when more substantial repair is needed.
- 4** Avoid widening existing streets without providing sidewalks, street trees, and other elements that maintain the street wall and emphasize the human scale.
- 5** Avoid paving over areas that could be used for plantings.
- 6** Screen parking lots from streets and sidewalks with trees and shrubs and include interior planting islands to provide shade and visual relief from large expanses of asphalt.
- 7** Provide water in parking lots for landscape maintenance.
- 8** Install adequate lighting in parking areas to provide security in evening hours. Select fixtures that are appropriate to a historic setting and avoid cobra head types.
- 9** Avoid demolishing historic buildings for any parking areas or facilities.
- 10** Ensure that the design of any new parking structure relates to the design guidelines in *Brochure 5: Guidelines for Commercial Buildings*.
- 11** Attempt in the street-level design of any such facility to relate to pedestrians through the use of storefronts or display windows or other visual features.

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## PEDESTRIAN WALKS AND CURBS

- 1** Retain historic paving materials such as brick sidewalks and limestone curbs.
- 2** When sidewalks must be repaired, match adjacent materials (except for modern concrete) in design, color, texture, and tooling. Avoid extensive variation in sidewalk and curb materials.
- 3** When sidewalks need replacement, use a paving unit such as brick or patterned concrete that relates to the scale of the district. Curbs likewise should be a material such as stone or exposed concrete aggregate. Avoid pouring concrete in continuous strips.
- 4** Avoid excessive curb cuts for vehicular access across pedestrian ways. Where curb cuts are necessary, mark them with a change in materials, color, texture, or grade.
- 5** Avoid blocking the sidewalk with too many street furniture elements and remove obsolete signs and poles.
- 6** Maintain a distinction between sidewalks and streets. Avoid paving sidewalks with asphalt and retain the curb strip.
- 7** When using limestone curbstones, seek alternatives to painting them to indicate no parking zones.
- 8** Consider using some type of distinctive crosswalks at key intersections or crossings to tie surrounding areas into the mall and relate to current levels of improvements there.
- 9** Continue to expand the installation of handicapped ramps as planned throughout the district.
- 10** Seek opportunities to link important pedestrian areas of activity. Maintain walkway connections from surrounding streets to the Old Town Mall, even where easements are required over private prop-



Limestone curbs are a unique and valuable feature to the streets of the historic district.



This pedestrian connector is well designed with brick pavers, historically styled light fixtures and landscaped borders.

erty.

## STREET FURNITURE AND LIGHTING

- 1 Expand the use of pedestrian-scaled, traditionally styled light fixtures like those on the mall. The design of these may vary in different parts of the district but do not expand the use of wooden poles and cobra-head light fixtures. A temporary alternative would be to install pedestrian-scaled arms on existing wooden poles.
- 2 Provide adequate lighting at critical areas of pedestrian/vehicular conflict such as parking lots, alleys, and crosswalks.
- 3 Provide outlets on light standards for seasonal lighting and brackets for hanging banners and decorations for special events.
- 4 Continue to use traditional designs for trash containers in the district, possibly matching other street furniture.
- 5 Place benches at key locations in the district. Use traditional designs constructed of wood and/or cast iron.
- 6 Continue to make any existing or future street furniture such as newspaper boxes, telephone booths, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, planters, and bollards compatible in design, color, and materials with existing elements like those on the mall.



The Loudoun Street Mall has a well coordinated and designed set of street furniture and lighting elements.



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- 7** Avoid placing too many elements on narrow sidewalks.

## SIGNALS AND UTILITIES

- 1** Consider installing traffic signals on poles that are placed beside the street and are compatible with pedestrian-scaled light fixtures.
- 2** Place utilities underground if at all possible or locate behind buildings. Screen surface equipment.
- 3** Place necessary utilities such as transformers and overhead wires so that they are as visually unobtrusive as possible.
- 4** Encourage the siting of dumpsters and trash storage



Traffic signals are a prominent visual element throughout the district. Pole mounted designs that do not hang over intersections may be more appropriate to the scale of the district.

areas to be as unobtrusive as possible.

## PUBLIC SIGNS, PLAQUES, FOUNTAINS, AND ART

- 1 Continue to use the existing public directional and informational signs in the district. Use appropriate standards of design with skyline logo, color, and lettering styles for additional needed signs in the district.
- 2 Develop appropriate street identification signs, perhaps with a distinctive logo, and use these throughout the district to replace the current green street signs. Use round posts for these street signs.
- 3 Continue to promote the installation of local historical plaques commemorating significant events, buildings, and individuals in the district. These place-making elements play an important role in celebrating and communicating the history of the district.
- 4 Maintain carefully any existing place-making art features found in the historic district. Pursue the statuary park concept for part or all of the existing adjoining Judicial Center parking lot to build on the history-telling effort begun with the placement of the Admiral Byrd statue. Incorporate fountains, plazas, benches, seasonal plantings, and a local history timeline along the existing brick retaining wall in the downtown park which connects to the Old Town Welcome Center.
- 5 Avoid placing signposts in locations where they can interfere with the opening of vehicle doors; use the minimum number of signs necessary.



Quality graphics on public banners reinforce good design within the historic district.



Plaques and fountains add interest to space for visitors and residents alike.



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## SIDEWALK CAFES

*(Note: Sidewalk cafes require a permit from the Old Town Development Board)*

- 1 General Design**  
As much as possible all elements including chains, bollards, tables, chairs, planters, and trash containers should be of the same color, materials, and design character. Black is the dominant color of mall elements and it or other dark colors are preferred.
- 2 Fences, Chains and Bollards**  
They should be wrought iron or painted metal. Chains should be the size G-7 or larger. Bollards should be at least 3 inches in diameter.
- 3 Tables and Chairs**  
They should be wrought iron, painted metal or other approved material.
- 4 Planters**  
They should be compatible in terms of design, scale, materials, and color with other elements of the cafe.



The design of sidewalk cafes can reinforce the existing design vocabulary of other street furniture elements on the mall.

- 5 Umbrellas**  
They should contain a maximum of two colors that are compatible with the furniture and the size of the umbrella should be in scale with the table.
- 6 Trash Containers**  
They should be compatible in terms of design, materials, and color with other elements of the cafe and should be located within the cafe enclosure.
- 7 Newspaper Boxes**  
Newspaper boxes should be grouped in designated locations and placed within uniform frames of black metal.



## PORTABLE SIGNS (SANDWICH BOARD TYPE)

*(Note: Portable signs require a permit from the Old Town Development Board)*

- 1 Height**  
They should be a maximum of four feet.
- 2 Size**  
They should be a maximum of twelve square feet (six sq. ft. per side).
- 3 Materials**  
They should be constructed of metal or wood. Wood signs should be constructed of MDO board or a similar quality material and not grained plywood. All edges should be covered with molding.



- 4 Colors**  
They should have a maximum of four colors that relate to the colors of the associated building. Up to six colors may be appropriate for signs related to ornate Victorian era buildings.
  - 5 Lettering**  
The letters should be scaled to the size of the sign. No advertising trademarks or logos should be a part of the sign other than that of the business. Signs should not be of a type that has interchangeable letters.
- Menu board signs are allowed with an area for writing “specials of the day” with part of the sign area used for permanent lettering identifying the business. This lettering should be professionally painted or applied vinyl letters.

Sandwich boards reflect the commercial character of the downtown mall area and require a permit from the Old Town Development Board.

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